

Policy 2310 Public Participation at Board Meetings

Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school district. The public is cordially invited to attend board meetings to observe the board as it conducts its official business.

The board of education, as an elected representative body of the school district, also wishes to provide a forum for persons to express interests and concerns related to the school district. To provide an opportunity for input while conducting an orderly meeting, individuals or groups may be heard by the board in accordance with this policy or Policy [2300](#), section D, paragraph 2, which addresses public hearings.

A. Requests to Place Item on the Agenda

In order that the board may fairly and adequately discharge its overall responsibility, persons desiring an item to be placed on the agenda for a specific board meeting should direct written requests to the superintendent by 12:00 p.m. (noon) at least five business days prior to the meeting.

The request should include:

- 1) the name and address of the person or persons making the request;
- 2) the organization or group, if any, represented; and
- 3) a brief explanation of the nature of the item. Questions and/or materials to be presented to the board are to be submitted along with the request.

The superintendent will confer with the board chair concerning whether to approve placing the requested item on the agenda, and to determine the appropriate meeting for such discussion.

The superintendent, with the consent of the board chair, shall accept or deny a request for inclusion on the agenda for any reason determined appropriate by the superintendent and board chair. The superintendent will notify the requesting party of the response to the request. If the request is denied, the superintendent will explain any other processes available for addressing the concerns. (*See section below, Reports of Complaints.*)

Any item approved by the superintendent for inclusion on the agenda is subject to the approval of the board upon adoption of the agenda. At the meeting, the board may, by majority vote and notwithstanding prior denial by the superintendent, add an item to the agenda before the agenda is adopted. After the agenda has been adopted, a two-thirds vote is required to add a new item to the agenda, in accordance with Policy [2330](#), Board Meeting Agendas.

The board chair will establish the amount of time for individual or group presentations.

To ensure an orderly discussion and disposition of items, the discussion of agenda items will be limited to the members of the board, the superintendent, authorized school district personnel, or persons who have prior approval or are recognized by the board chair. Other persons present during the board meeting may speak only in response to a request or inquiry from a board member to obtain clarification of or additional information on the subject under consideration.

B. Public Comment

A part of each business meeting will be set aside for citizens to address the board through public comment. Each speaker will receive three minutes to present comments. An individual speaking on behalf of a group may be allowed to speak for five minutes at the discretion of the board chair. Speakers may sign up with the board clerk via email at boardclerk@cabarrus.k12.nc.us, or in person no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) the day of the regularly scheduled monthly business meeting. Speakers must provide contact information

including their name, group name (if applicable), relationship to Cabarrus County Schools, address, and phone number, and list the general education related topic of their presentation for the board minutes.

During the public comment period, the board chair will recognize speakers in the order in which they signed in or emailed. Substitute speakers will not be permitted, and speakers may not donate any portion of their time to another speaker. If a speaker is unable to present all of his or her information within the specified time limit, the speaker may provide the board with the additional information in written form. If an unusually large number of people requests to speak, a majority of the board may decide to reduce the time for each individual or to require the designation of a spokesperson for each group of persons supporting or opposing the same positions.

At any time, the board may establish additional procedures to ensure that public comment sessions proceed in an efficient and orderly manner. The board chair will read or distribute a general statement at the beginning of the public comment period outlining the acceptable procedures. In consultation with the board attorney, the board chair may prepare additional guidelines consistent with this policy.

Statements reasonably perceived to be disruptive or imminently threatening to the orderly operation of the meeting shall not be permitted. Any limitation on public comments shall be viewpoint neutral. The board chair will have the authority to rule the speaker out of order.

A person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the board chair, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor pursuant to [G.S. 143-318.17](#).

Board members will not respond to individuals who address the board except to request clarification of points made by the presenter.

Except in cases of emergency, information received during presentations will not be acted upon at the time it is received. It will take unanimous vote of the board members present to take action on a presentation considered to be of an unusual or emergency nature at the time it is presented.

Legal References: [G.S. 143-318.10](#) and [-318.17](#), [115C-36](#)

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (Policy [1740/4010\5001](#)), Role of Board Members in Handling Complaints (Policy [2122](#)), Board Meetings (Policy [2300](#)), Board Meeting Agenda (Policy [2330](#)), Responding to Complaints (Policy [1742/5060](#))

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Revised: May 14, 2001; May 11, 2015; October 10, 2016; March 12, 2018; September 13, 2021

Cabarrus County Schools